THE NEW PLATO

THOMAS L. MASSON

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OR

SOCRATES REDIVIVUS

BY

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PREFACE

THE reading of Plato is, like that of the Bible, only in a smaller way, indulged in by all supposedly educated Americans during their University days and remembered only in form. Indeed, the Bible has this advantage over Plato: it is read publicly every Sunday, so that snatches of its verbal grandeur must of necessity percolate through the minds of some of our more prominent citizens who have a reputation to maintain and therefore consider church-going in the nature of a necessity. But Plato stands unopened on the bookshelves.

It might be well occasionally in place of one of our modern sermons to substitute

the reading of one of Plato's dialogues. Socrates, as Emerson pointed out, is often tiresome. Yet he has the advantage of being generally instructive.

Every reader of Plato is struck by his modernness. He never grows old. He is always of To-day. It was this which has led me to apply the form of his dialogues—familiar to students in Jowett's translation—to some phases of our modern life.

In writing this book I have made no attempt to be serious. It would be quite proper (and usual) for me to say at this point, that if this volume should lead my reader to take up once again the study of Plato, then I should feel that it has not been written in vain. But even at the risk of disappointing a vast multitude, I shall not say this expected word. For the truth is, there is no reason why I should desire any one to read Plato. No modern author

should encourage in any way the sale of old books. It is distinctly bad business.

On the contrary, I should prefer, with due regard, of course, to that true modesty which no author should wholly dispense with, to press some of the advantages of this book upon the hesitating reader. The type is purposely made so large that it can be easily read after dark on most of our principal railroad systems. It is not too long to be fatiguing, and, indeed, may be tossed aside at any point without regard to the author's feelings. It has a mildly intellectual atmosphere, greatly in its favor and highly desirable; for example, at house parties. It is pleasantly dialectic in tone and contains no morbid allusions. It is not too humorous (a phrase which I hereby give the book reviewers leave to quote in place of the usual set criticism), and it has this grand

quality: that what satire it may contain never applies to the reader, but always to some one else; so that every one may feel perfectly safe to read it.

MARRIED LIFE

I

MARRIED LIFE

THE party was assembled at the house of Critias. And Hippias, the married man, was there. Though how he got away no one knows. While they were jesting about this, a servant came in and announced that Socrates was without.

Ah! said Hippias, I have been waiting for this, because I understand that Socrates has said something about marriage and women not altogether to their credit. And you, Critias, he said, turning to the host, have certainly upheld him.

By Hercules! replied Critias, I am not to defend Socrates, who must speak for himself and who can take care of what he says.

What's this? said Socrates, coming in and sitting on the couch beside Hippias. Can it be, he said, turning to the married man, that you have something to say about your condition?

I was only saying, replied Hippias, that I was glad of this opportunity of meeting with you, who have certain opinions, I understand, about women and their treatment, and I should like to know how you feel about it, Socrates, above all things.

You are wrong, said Socrates, because you must know that I have no opinion about women or their treatment. I have been married too long for that. But I am after the truth of this matter, as you say; and first, Hippias, I would ask you what is your own opinion of women, or if you have any?

That is just like you, Socrates, and I understand very well what you wish. Be-

cause when I give you my opinion, you will begin to put me at fault. Besides, you are the one who must tell what you know.

But, replied Socrates, smiling, I have confessed that I wish to learn. However, Hippias, let us find out the nature of this thing, or arrive at some starting-point. What would you say, Hippias, if I should tell you there were no drygoods stores?

I should laugh at you, Socrates.

And should you continue to laugh if I should state there were no milliners?

Perhaps I would not have the heart to laugh at that. But I should refute what you say.

Very well, then. And if I should speak of dressmakers and jewelers and women's clubs and declare they did not exist, would you not contradict me?

Most certainly.

And how about other things, Hippias? Are there any cosmetics; are there fancy drugs and sweetmeats and decorating establishments and bridge parties and sewing circles and a number of other things of this description? And suppose I should deny all this—what would you say?

I should say that you were a crazy man.

But for you and me, Hippias, these things do not exist.

No.

And they do not exist for Critias and Gorgias here, or Alcibiades—except perfumery, Hippias, and you know Alcibiades cannot help that.

Yes, yes. I understand what you mean, Socrates.

But you assert these things are.

I do—certainly.

Then if not for us, for some one else.

Yes, Socrates, I should say for some one else.

And what is your opinion, Hippias, as to who that is?

Would I be wrong in asserting that it is Woman?

No; I think you would be quite right. You should say, then, Hippias, that women exist for these purposes.

I do not think I quite understand you, Socrates. For what purposes did you say?

At this Critias interrupted.

Hippias is afraid to speak, he said, because he fears his wife is somewhere about. But I assure you, he said to Hippias, you are perfectly safe.

Have no fear, said Socrates. Xanthippe, who, as you know, is my own wife, never would think of coming here, and we can therefore go on with the discussion. I think, Hippias, you under-

stand about milliners, dressmakers, and others?

Yes.

And are they women themselves, or for women?

I should say, for women.

Then there is a difference between them?

Oh, yes.

What is that difference, O Hippias? One is not without the other. They do not exist apart.

Hippias straightened up, looking about to see that the doors were closed.

There is really no difference, he replied, except that they both might be compared to a comet and a tail. Woman is the comet, and all the things you mention string out behind her like a long tail. Now, Socrates, as I see the matter, women exist for purposes of motherhood, no more, no less, eh? But, in reality, they

rule the world. Nine-tenths of all the things that are bought they buy, being untrained for this purpose from babyhood. The result is that we men are obliged to toil twice as hard as need be, in order to supply women with wealth enough to squander on things which their whole training has not fitted them to select. They rule us, Socrates, because of the immense advantage they have in never forgetting a trivial thing. That is to say, they nag us into obedience, and we find it easier for our peace of mind to give in to them, and be their slaves, rather than to run the risk of having them never let up on us. And so they always get what they want. In short, nine-tenths of all the business of the world—for, take away those you have mentioned, milliners, drygoods merchants, and others, and only about one-tenth would remain—is conducted by women, who are thoroughly incompetent

to undertake it; and yet we permit them to do it because we are afraid to be badgered.

That is a long speech for you to make, Hippias, said Socrates, and I think you are well able to discourse on the subject. Only you came near causing me trouble.

How is that? said Hippias. I hope, he added, you agree with what I say?

At this all the company, perceiving Socrates was anxious over something, arose.

Yes, he said, Hippias, I agree with what you say, only I must be going along, and I advise your doing the same. For, as I said, your long talk came near getting me into trouble. This is the hour, Hippias, when my wife gives an afternoon tea, and should I fail to be there, I might not be able to attend another symposium for a season.

At this Hippias turned pale.

Promise me, he said, that nothing of

my speech will be repeated. Because, Socrates, he added, pleadingly, I, too, for the moment had entirely forgotten that I was a married man.

And they hurried out arm in arm, the sympathy of the whole company being with them.

THE GAMBLER

II

THE GAMBLER

GLAUCON came in while Thrasymachus was still silent, and sat beside Adæimantus.

He had been at the Exchange and his face was flushed. He wanted to know what the argument was about.

About the nature of Justice and Injustice, said Socrates. But unless I am mistaken, you have something better to tell us, for you have, I see, been a victor at some game. Now, I did not suspect you to be a discus thrower nor yet a verse-maker, and you must tell us what it is that makes you so flushed. For, my dear Glaucon, you cannot be drunk so early in the day.

No, indeed, replied Glaucon; only I was thinking, as I came in and learned you were discussing the nature of Justice and Injustice, that surely there can be nothing more foolish than words of this sort when you might, as I have done, be making ten thousand drachmæ on the rise in Copper.

And when did this occur? asked Socrates.

It has just occurred, replied Glaucon, smiling. And surely Justice and Injustice, the nature of which, I believe, can never be determined, are of small consequence beside this Great Fact. And if you, therefore, had not wasted your time, but had bought Copper, as I did, you might all be rich instead of ignorant.

I am sure, Glaucon, said Socrates, that we are all indeed ignorant, as you say; but as for the rest, by Zeus! I do not

understand. And yet I should be glad to know how this may be.

That would have been easy if you had bought when I did.

And I would have benefited in like proportion with you?

Certainly you would.

And if I had benefited with you, then another, if he had done likewise, would have benefited?

Nothing, Socrates, could be more certain than that.

Let me understand you, Glaucon, at this point, said Socrates, for it is highly important to the course of the inquiry, that we fall into no error. It is agreed, then, that I, by buying Copper at the same time as you, would have received benefit, and likewise another?

Yes, that is it, said Glaucon.

And if Thrasymachus here had bought,

he would have benefited also without doubt?

Yes.

And would Adæimantus?

Yes, Adæimantus likewise.

And if Thrasymachus and Adæimantus, there would be others?

Yes, others.

Suppose we say Polemarchus; would you agree?

Yes.

And Clertophon and Cephalus?

Yes, indeed.

And Gorgias, the Sophist, and Polidrus and Critias?

Yes.

And if they, then also their friends and acquaintances?

Certainly.

And if their friends, then the friends of their friends, for if one received a benefit, then all would?

That is precisely the truth, Socrates, said Glaucon; and do you not see that this would make more buying, so that the price would go still higher?

I cannot deny the truth of that, said Socrates, with a smile, and I would ask you, Glaucon, to admit that as the benefit is for one and slightly more for two, then it would only be complete when all have bought, so that when this was finally accomplished and every one had become a buyer of Copper, then we would be a nation of rich men, snapping our fingers at Fate.

Glaucon assented to this with some reluctance.

And would you, Glaucon, be satisfied with Copper alone, or would you want something else?

Something else.

You would wish good wine and a seat in the theater and maybe a chariot or so,

lovers and sandals and lambs' meat and pulse and other things with which to refresh your body.

Yes.

And so you would wish to exchange some of the Copper you had bought for these things and more?

So it would seem.

And Thrasymachus here would feel the same?

Yes.

And also the others?

Yes, the others.

And each one of them would sell his Copper to get these things, for we cannot live by Copper alone.

That is so.

And would you be surprised, my dear Glaucon, when this had been done, if the price of Copper should fall to where it was when you bought it?

I should think that very likely.

And even lower?

Yes, lower. And I know now of what you are leading me to, Socrates, for you think to catch me in a trap by your honey words. For we cannot, as you say, eat Copper, and therefore we must exchange it for other things, and the price depends only upon the law of supply and demand, and not upon a value attached to the thing itself. And this I understand better than any man living, for I know how to buy when it is down and when to sell when it is up. And if all men did exactly the same, there would, of course, be no actual benefit, but only those who are wise and who use their judgments and accordingly reap the benefits. For the fear of other men, and likewise their confidence, is what I must estimate; and if I do this rightly, I will surely benefit. And what is the use of talking to you, with your hair-splitting distinctions, when the Great Fact re-

mains that I have made the profit, that I have achieved happiness? And in face of this, words are of no avail, for it is the money that talks, and you cannot get around that.

By Hercules! said Socrates, that is a long speech for you to make, my dear boy, and I seem to be all in confusion and groping about in the dark. And I hardly know how to answer you, although I dare say you are right, and there is no use in talking any more. Still, there is a little matter I should like to have set at rest, and of which I have no doubt you will be able to satisfy me. Let me ask you, therefore, whether this is the only time you have won, or whether you have won and also lost before; for I believe it to be true that you have spent much time on the Exchange.

I have both won and lost before, said Glaucon.

And have you won more, in the total amount of your winnings, than you have lost?

I should say that I had, counting this time, and as I have just said, you cannot get around that.

I am not trying to get around that, my dear friend, but only to clear away the clouds of ignorance from my stupid brain. And I should like to ask you if ever you have won as much at one time as you have won now, or is this your greatest winning?

Not my greatest, for once or twice I have won more than this.

And were you as happy then about it as now?

I should say I was as happy.

More or less?

More, Socrates, when I won more, and less when I won less.

I like that about you, Glaucon, be-

cause your answer is so clear. And it appears that at the time you won more than you have now you were happier than you are now in proportion to your winning then over now.

So it appears.

And you are less happy now than you were when you won more than you have now, in proportion to the difference.

That is right.

And you would be still happier if you won more?

Yes.

And less happy if you had won less?

Yes, less happy.

Then, Glaucon, you are not so happy as you might be.

Glaucon gave a reluctant consent to this.

But I am still happier than you, he added.

I have no doubt of this, replied Soc-

rates, for indeed I am the most miserable of men, and all because I have not your divine judgment in buying and selling on the Exchange, which appears to me marvelous. Nevertheless, Glaucon, unless I am mistaken, and I hope you will correct me if I am, then you are no happier now than you were at a time when you won just as much and no more than you have won?

No; for that would be the same.

And you were just as happy, no more or no less?

Yes, just as happy.

Then the condition of your happiness, whether it is the same now as it was, depends upon the condition of your winnings, and when they are more, it is more, and when they are less, it is less. And from this it would seem that your happiness, like those instruments which rise or fall according to the changes in the weath-

er, corresponds likewise to the price of Copper or other things you buy.

On the contrary, replied Glaucon, you are all wrong, for my happiness depends upon my judgment, which determines what I shall buy, and this is excellent and provides me with a system which is better than the system used by others.

But it is not so good as it might be, for you have just acknowledged that you are not so happy as you might be.

But it is good enough.

Glaucon here started to rise, and said suddenly that he must be going as he had something to attend to.

Where are you going? said Socrates.

On a journey to Egypt, replied Glaucon, for I need the rest and change, having been subjected to much nervous excitement, and I must go and make the arrangements, for the trireme sails from the Piræus to-morrow.

But why should you go there if you are as happy now as you have just said?

Because, O Socrates, as I have explained, I have won my journey, and therefore I am going.

Then it must be true, O Glaucon, that your happiness is not here, but in Egypt, for otherwise you would be more contented here; and yet you said that the Great Fact was that you had won, and that was enough in itself. But this appears not to be so, but that in reality you are dependent upon Egypt. I am curious about this, for still there seems to be something we have not discovered.

At this moment a slave entered and handed Glaucon a message, and his hands trembled as he unfolded the papyrus.

By Poseidon! he exclaimed, they are calling on me for margin, for it seems while I have been idling my time here there has been a great fall in prices

amounting almost to a panic and Copper fell ten points in almost no time. Oh, why did I linger here!

Adæimantus and Thrasymachus tried to console him, but Socrates did not join them. Indeed, this strange man is a puzzle to all.

O Glaucon, he said, can it be that we were both wrong? For first it appeared that your happiness was dependent upon others, according as they bought and sold. Then it appeared dependent on the prices themselves, then upon your judgment, and after that upon Egypt. But now, my stricken friend, it is plain that I alone am responsible; for had you not stopped to listen to me, all would have been well.

Yes, retorted Glaucon, you are the one, and I might have known it, for I had in mind to sell out when I had good profit, but thought I would wait a little until the

price grew higher, when I would make still more, and you, by your silly clatter, kept me from watching the market, as I should have done.

And that is where you were wrong, indeed, replied Socrates; for to depend upon me in any way, my dear Glaucon, is to adopt a foolish expedient, and one which I myself cannot even recommend, for am I not myself always going to others for counsel?

THE BRIDGE PLAYER

III

THE BRIDGE PLAYER

SOCRATES, *who narrates the dialogue.*
COMPANION.
PROTAGORAS, *the Bridge Player.*
HIPPOCRATES.

COMPANION: I was wondering, Socrates, where you could have been, for at the house of Callias they had not seen you, and Alcibiades, who has been in Macedonia at a motor-chariot race and just returned, did not know of your whereabouts, and, though I inquired at the Theater of Dionysus, they could not say where you were.

SOCRATES: I believe I heard a rumor to the effect that Alcibiades was victor in the

motor-chariot games; his car, if I mistake not, being the first. And I was about to seek him out and congratulate him. But I was detained.

Com.: Yes, he was, Socrates. And how were you detained? For it seems strange to me that you should have been kept back from your quest of Alcibiades, for certainly you could not have discovered a fairer love.

Soc.: Yet that may well be.

Com.: In Athens?

Soc.: Yes, in Athens.

Com.: Then sit down and tell me, for I am curious to know. Of what land is he a native?

Soc.: Of Abdera, next to the Deme of Chicago, and since he has been here he has been surrounded by some of the most noted men and women, who have flocked to his instruction. And yesterday morning early I was awakened by Hippocrates,

the son of Apollodorus, who thumped at my door; and upon my answering he said that Protagoras, the Bridge-Whist Player, had come.

Of course, I said, and is he indeed so wonderful?

You should hear him discourse, replied Hippocrates, for he holds that all virtue is contained in Bridge playing, and you know that clubs have been formed all over, according to his instruction, and women are specially interested and play all the time. Indeed, they say that every gynæconitis is being dedicated to the new Bridge god, and I should like you, Socrates, to go and hear what he has to say; for surely if there is all this virtue in Bridge, we must not be behindhand in the means of acquiring it.

You are quite right, Hippocrates, I said, for life is so short that wisdom of the best is not easy to attain.

And hurrying on my sandals, we proceeded to the vestibule of the house; and, thinking we were common Euchre players, we were at first not admitted. But at last the man opened the door and we came in.

Protagoras was there dealing the cards to a table of women who had come on from the Deme of Philadelphia, and there was considerable chattering going on, Protagoras explaining meanwhile the various cards to play. But as soon as I came in he laid them down and welcomed me, while the women kept on.

You have come, Socrates, he said, to learn Bridge, and certainly there is no better teacher than I am; and I maintain that it leads to virtue, and that nothing is wanting to those who play it. Now, there are some teachers of Bridge who will not admit that they accept money, as if it were something to be ashamed of; but I am

of the other sort who receive my due—for this I have practised for years—and there can be no harm in anything which is of such benefit to the State and which is the source of so much virtue.

There seems to be a confusion here, Protagoras, I replied, and before we proceed I should like to have you set me right; for first, you tell me that I have come here to learn Bridge from you, and then you imply that I shall also acquire virtue. This is, indeed, more than I bargained for, and I should like you to tell me the difference between Bridge and Virtue.

There is none, replied Protagoras, for by learning one you acquire the other, for the two things are inseparable; and you know that virtue lies most in women, who are by far the best Bridge players, which is one proof. And the other is this,

O Socrates, and I should like to have you listen attentively.

I assure you I am listening, Protagoras, said I, for when pearls of wisdom are set before me in such a glistening array I am fairly enraptured at the sight.

Well, then, he proceeded, when men, and after them women appeared, the gods bestowed upon them certain gifts, such as Heroism, Justice, Government, and so on; but the women, when this had been done, were dissatisfied, for they complained that whereas upon man had been bestowed occupations enough to keep him busy, all they could do was to invent duties of their own, such as spending money and taking care of children, and so they demanded that something lofty and inspiring be likewise presented to them, so that they would know what to do with themselves afternoons, and which at the same time would tend toward the highest virtue;

for they desired something really serious besides Religion. Apollo held council and decreed that they should have the gift of Bridge. But Orpheus, the son of Œagrus, because he was suffered to die at the hands of a woman, cast a spell over the decree, so that generations should pass before women should come to their own, and when this came about they should be taught by men. Hence it happens that both men and women play, but women gain by it the most; and especially is this so when there is a stake, for they are obliged by the gods only to appear to play a square game, whereas in reality they rely upon the forbearance of man, who has no chance against them except when he be a new player, when he usually holds the best cards, until he has learned how. And this is why, Socrates, there can be no difference between Bridge and Virtue.

When Protagoras had finished I looked at Hippocrates and said:

O Son of Hippocrates, I am indeed grateful to you for having brought me hither, for surely no one could be so wise as Protagoras. But there is still one small difficulty which I should like him to explain, and I should like to ask you, Protagoras, if, as you say, Virtue came first and Bridge afterward—for I assume that you admit this—what was the nature of Virtue before it came to be Bridge?

It was, he said, divided into three parts—morning, afternoon and evening—and it consisted in occupying oneself with one's house, one's children and one's husband. But afterward these were all changed into Bridge.

Well, then, I said, Courage is Bridge.

Surely, Socrates, for it takes courage to double it back with only the ace of hearts and one other suit.

And Justice is Bridge.

It must be, he said, for if a man go out to his club and play poker night after night, it is but justice that his wife should belong to as many Bridge clubs as she likes.

And Temperance is Bridge?

It was some time before Protagoras replied to this, and Ctesippus, who was always inclined to be caustic, began quoting from the poet Stasinus, who sings:

Of Zeus, the author and creator of these
things
You will not tell——

But Protagoras interrupted him and said, hastily, Yes, Socrates, Temperance is Bridge, for it is only by Temperance that we can win, for if we had not Temperance we would always be making it without; and by Temperance also we play to the score.

But are there hours of the day or night, I said, when women will not play?

No, he said, there are not.

And you admit freely, I said, that she will get up and leave the baby, or will lie out of an engagement, or will pretend to be sick to a relative who is coming, or will resort to any expedient if there comes a message from some one in the suburbs, whom possibly she has never seen but once, to fill in at a game.

I admit that, he said.

And is Temperance the opposite of Intemperance?

Yes, he said.

And are opposites like or unlike?

They are unlike.

And those things which are unlike are opposites, or are they something else?

They are opposites.

And she who goes to play Bridge, no

matter where or when, or what she is doing, is always temperate?

That is what I maintain, he said.

And how about flute playing—if she were asked to leave her husband to play the flute, would that be temperate?

No, Socrates, he said, that would be intemperate—but it is not Bridge.

And of an author's reading?

The same.

And of shopping and golf and the like?

All the same, he said.

Then, I said, O Protagoras, if she be asked to go to two games of Bridge, at one and the same time, which might easily happen, she would refuse to go to the shorter and would naturally go to the longer?

Yes, the longer.

And by going to the longer she would stay away from the shorter?

Yes.

And the one that is shorter is shorter than the one which is long?

That is so, he said.

And that which is longer is longer than that which is short?

He nodded.

And is the short like the long, or unlike?

It is unlike.

And things which are unlike cannot be like?

They cannot.

And the like is opposite to that which is unlike?

It is, he said.

And that game of Bridge which is longer than the other is temperate?

He was obliged to admit this.

And the other is unlike, therefore opposite?

He reluctantly said, Yes.

Then, Protagoras, Bridge is temperate

sometimes and intemperate at others. But Virtue is never intemperate.

And with this I was about to conclude the argument, when a chorus of voices from one of the tables interrupted me. It seems that a hand had just been finished by the Philadelphia dames, who desired to discuss it with Protagoras, and had I not made good my escape I should have had them all about my ears, for they began howling at me and calling me a tiresome intermeddler, and Hippocrates stood between us while I fled.

COM.: And what do you conceive from this, Socrates, to be the lesson?

SOC.: I should say it was never to argue when women are present, and never to try and find out a reason for playing Bridge; for only the gods know, and I am not inclined to believe they will tell, just at present.

ON SOCIALISM

IV

ON SOCIALISM

PAUSANIAS, who had long taken an interest in the State and the rise and fall of political parties, and who was present at the Symposium where Alcibiades disgraced himself by coming in drunk, has recorded a conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades which took place during one of their campaigns. And it would seem that Alcibiades, though pleasure-loving in the extreme, was nevertheless taken up with questions of the day, and desired to learn, though afterward he proved himself too rash in politics and hastened the downfall of the State. I met Alcibiades at a banquet given in the house of Callicles, said Pausanias, and

while I cannot tell all that he related to me as having passed between him and Socrates, I will relate as much as I know. Now, they were in Macedonia, reclining at ease under a plane tree, when a messenger brought tidings of a Socialistic movement in the Deme of Paterson and Alcibiades was for branding all those who took part in the movement and depriving them of the rights of citizenship.

I should think, Socrates, he said, that no punishment could be too severe for these wretches, who stir up the common people to sedition and make it even dangerous to ride through the streets in a motor-chariot without being degraded with hootings, and certainly they should be prevented.

Your informant, Alcibiades, replied Socrates, may have misled you as to the character of the movement, for if I mistake not he came straight from the Ex-

change, and it is barely possible that he might not have the truth of the matter, for those who live by finance and this modern method of juggling may not know the truth of the matter.

And yet, replied Alcibiades, you must know that the daily papers have little to say in their favor.

And who are the Editors of the papers? asked Socrates, smiling.

I should say they were men of Intellect.

And do they run their papers by their Intellect alone, or is there something else?

Something else.

What is that thing?

I should say it was money.

And is it their money or money of some one else?

I cannot answer that, Socrates, for, indeed, I do not know.

But would it surprise you, my friend,

to learn that it was some one else's money?

That may well be.

And if some one else's money that it was the money of financiers?

I begin to see now, Socrates, what you mean.

And possibly this is why when Orators of Socialism talk, no one reports their doings, so that in silence they may be organizing and changing the hearts of the people, although this is not reported because the Editors are in reality slaves.

By Jupiter! my boy, you are keen on the scent, yet we have not yet found out what Socialism is, and this seems important. Will you, therefore, ask, and I will answer, or I will ask and you answer?

As you will. Now a great many people think it a bad thing and a menace to all civilization. But I should like to know your opinion, Socrates.

I can only give you that, Alcibiades, by asking you some questions. First, then, there are multimillionaires.

So I have heard.

And I believe there are people who cannot support themselves. They are in the majority, are they not?

I should say they were.

And can you tell me, my dear friend, what Wealth is?

Would I be wrong in saying that it is Labor, Socrates?

That is an excellent reply; and, yet, I should rather say that it was Work. Labor means working with one's hands under control, whereas Work means all effort, mental or physical. And Wealth really represents effort in all its branches, mental and physical. A day laborer may earn one dollar a day. An artist, painting a thousand-dollar picture, earns what one thousand men earn in one day, or one hun-

dred men working ten days. Now, Alcibiades, when a man has millions, what does he really control?

Work, of course.

Or what other name is there?

Why, I suppose you might say Men.

Yes—Men. Therefore, each multimillionaire really controls a vast army, and though his purposes and aims are concealed, he directs his army and makes it do as he pleases.

I see that quite plainly, Socrates, and now, let me ask you a question. Just how can he direct his army?

Surely, Alcibiades, you are entitled to know. He uses his army in many indirect and fortuitous ways to control the State, to administer injustice, to keep the people down, to advance the price of land and other necessaries, besides controlling the press. In the old days, Alcibiades, the man who owned an army was forced

to maintain it. But in these days the owner of an army makes it pay its own dividends. That is why it grows so constantly.

But what, O Socrates, has all this to do with Socialism?

Only this, Alcibiades, that all the armies owned by multimillionaires are beginning to do something.

And what, pray, is that something?

They are beginning to think.

And is this Socialism?

I should say you were right, Alcibiades.

LEARNING

V

LEARNING

(*As Narrated by Agathon*)

I WAS walking yesterday near the Phalerian Wall, on the road leading toward the Acropolis, where I intended to view the new work done on the Temple of Erechtheum, when I met Axiochus, who as you know, is the father of the boy Cleinias, and he related to me a conversation he had had the day previous with Socrates.

Axiochus was anxious about his son, and he had applied to one of the Sophists, I think it was Euthydemus, with regard to his instruction. But afterward he met Socrates near the Palæstra.

I was considering, he said, what is

Education, and I should like to ask you, Socrates, how you view the whole matter. For I wish my children to be brought up in the best manner, and I would have them under the right teachers. Only yesterday I was looking in one of the magazines and I saw several pages devoted to this subject, with schools and colleges, each one of which, according to its own statement, appeared to be the best. And then there are the schools furnished by the State, which are cheaper, and I have heard it stoutly maintained were better. And I should like to have you enlighten me on a subject which is dear to me and important, not only to myself, but to the State.

I only wish I might give you the knowledge you desire, my friend, said Socrates, but my wisdom extends only to asking questions, and as you are a parent, you doubtless know much more than myself, who have never had any edu-

cation, as I speak but one language and have never even been through Yale, Harvard or Princeton. But first, I should like to ask you what they teach at these schools and colleges?

Everything, Socrates. So far as I know, nothing is missing, and even deportment and manners and religions are taught.

And this must be why, said Socrates, with a smile, our youth are all growing so intelligent, for in one of the new cars that runs on rails, dedicated to the Goddess Electra, I observed that the maidens all stood up, which seemed to me good, for it showed that the fleeting and mistaken deference for women, which has been too common, is going out. And if it be true, Axiochus, that they are taught everything, surely that is enough, and any school is a good one, and that ends the matter.

But I have observed, Socrates, that

other young men who have been through these schools, while they do appear, indeed, to know everything, when they come out are never able to do what they appear to know, and this seemed to me curious. For, although they are taught language, they cannot use it, and though they are taught architecture, they cannot build a house. And though they are taught chemistry, they seem very far from being chemists, for they puff continually at a white roll which is called a cigarette, and their talk is of nothing but sports, such as golf and football and of love-making.

Well, then, Axiochus, perhaps the case is not so bad as it appears. And let me ask you, if you desired to learn the art of smoking cigarettes, to whom would you apply?

To a cigarette smoker.

And if you wished to learn football?

To a football player.

And these young men are cigarette smokers and football players.

That appears to be the case, only the cigarette smokers are not football players.

You mean there are two classes—one of football players and the other cigarette smokers.

So it would seem.

Let us proceed a little further, Axiochus, and not be disdainful at the turn the argument is taking. For we have this to console us, that neither of us knows the truth; so, no matter how little we succeed, we can be no worse off than we are now. And I would ask you now if you wished to learn how to build a temple or a house, to whom would you apply?

To an architect.

So, then, Axiochus, if you desired to learn cigarette smoking and other sports you would go to school and college.

That seems quite evident, Socrates.

But would you go because these things are taught there, or because those who practise these things are there?

Because of the latter.

And if you wished to learn house-building, where would you go, to school or to an architect?

As I have said, I would go to an architect.

And would you go to school to learn chemistry, or to a chemist?

To a chemist.

Then it appears, O Axiochus, that if you wish to learn a particular thing the school is the wrong place to go.

So it would seem, Socrates, and yet I cannot but feel there is something wrong with the argument, because it is common sense to believe that everybody would not be sending their children to school and college if they did not learn anything.

At this Socrates, who was in his best humor, for Xanthippe, his wife, was off on her summer vacation, smiled and said: O Axiochus, let us offer a libation to the gods, for by the dog of Egypt, we shall refuse to let a slight difficulty confuse us. And I am as ready as you to believe that we have not yet succeeded in discovering the truth. Let us therefore approach the argument from another point. And it occurs to me right here that we should inquire more definitely about the schools. If, in teaching architecture, they do not employ architects, or in chemistry, chemists, or in rhetoric, rhetoricians, then whom do they employ?

They employ teachers, or professors, but in the case of rhetoric, they employ rhetoricians.

Then, my dear boy, we must go back, for we have made a fatal error, as it seems that in some cases we should be able to

learn, for instance, rhetoric from rhetoricians, but not architecture from architects, but this latter only from professors.

Yes, so it would seem.

Then there are two classes of those who teach—those who are actually practising the thing they teach—for otherwise they would not be called by the name—and others who only teach but do not practise. That is to say, from rhetoricians or professors of rhetoric we learn that which they practise, likewise from mathematicians the same, but in the case of architecture and so on, we only learn from teachers.

That appears to be so, Socrates.

And what is the difference between one who practises and one who teaches but does not practise?

I should say—and you must correct me if I am wrong—that one of them learns from some one else, while the other learns directly.

That seems to be a good answer, Axiochus, only it appears to me that if we would simplify the case, we might say that knowledge such as men appear to be possessed of is derived in two ways—first, by the mind alone, and second, by the mind and the hands. Now I am of the opinion that rhetoric or mathematics cannot be taught, for it appears to me that these things we know already, and that to arrive at conclusions concerning them we are made to recollect what has already been in the soul, which is my doctrine of reminiscence. And I should like to call that boy to prove what I say.

SOCRATES: Here, boy, how old are you?

BOY: Eight, sir.

SOC.: And have you ever been to school?

BOY: No, sir.

SOC.: That is a piece of bad fortune

on your part, for otherwise you might know already more than I have acquired in fifty years. Now, boy, here is a cord from your sandal. Put it on the floor there as straight as you can. What line do you call that? Is it a straight line?

Boy: Yes, sir.

Soc.: Now take another cord and put it along by the other, and, boy, put it so that they will be the same distance apart.

Boy: Yes, sir. There they are.

Soc.: Now, I ask you, boy, if Pallas Athena were to present you with a Hermes wand so that you could stretch out those lines forever—just as long as you can think—when would they come together?

Boy: They couldn't meet, ever.

Soc.: How do you know?

Boy: I don't know. I only know they couldn't.

Then it appears, O Axiochus, that all

professors are superfluous when they are nothing else; but when they also practise with their hands, they may be of some service. And so I ask you, what is your son to be?

A useful citizen, Socrates, I hope.

Then, O Axiochus, let him be his own teacher in those things of the mind he desires to learn, and in the arts and sciences let him go to those who practise them. And where would you send him if you desired him to become most proficient in cigarette smoking, football playing and other sports—such as love-making, which we have barely mentioned before, but which seems a sport? Where, then, Axiochus, would you send him for these purposes?

It appears, Socrates, that I would send him to school, for these are the things which he would learn there better than anywhere else.

ON SURGEONS

VI

ON SURGEONS

(*Socrates is the Narrator*)

I WAS just about to remove my sandals, there being no one present but Agathon, when Apollodorus came in with Eryximachus, the physician, or perhaps I should say surgeon, for I believe there is a distinction between them. And Apollodorus introduced him to me as being the most distinguished and costly of them all.

Sit here, Eryximachus, said I, for I have a desire to converse with you. And first tell me how you came by your vogue.

Easy enough, Socrates, he said with a smile. I performed operations enough, and I cultivated a kind of austerity and

knowingness which prevented my patients from questioning me too closely. For this filled them with awe of me, and I can assure you that this is my most valuable asset.

Well, now, I said, I would have you consider how far your skill entered into it. Also if there were any others like you who could have done the same for less money.

You are insolent, Socrates, he said, and would have moved his seat, but Apollodorus reminded him who I was and he calmed down.

Remember, I said, I am concerned only for the truth of the inquiry. Perhaps then you will tell me what skill is.

It is experience added to native talent, I should say.

Well, then, there is the skill of the tailor, the shoemaker, the weaver. And is yours the same skill, or is it different?

I should say different.

The tailor sews cloth with his hands, and you sew flesh with yours.

I think that is so, Socrates.

And does the method of sewing cloth, or the cut of the cloth, or the eye of the maker, differ from the method of surgery?

It seems so. For one thing, flesh is more valuable.

You surprise me greatly, Eryximachus, because I was of the opposite opinion. I was down by the Academy yesterday and a workman was run over by a motor-chariot whose owner had insured himself against such annoyances by paying a small sum. And the man was taken into an ambulance, and shortly he died while the surgeons were smoking and laughing. And the next day I looked in the papers, but his name was not recorded. He was a common laborer, Eryximachus,

whom possibly you would not have treated. You have said that flesh is valuable.

I do not mean all flesh, Socrates.

Oh, now I begin to see. You should have been more careful in your statement. There is then a difference. There is the flesh of the laborer.

Cheap flesh.

And of the millionaire.

That is valuable.

But is it valuable because it is flesh?

Not necessarily, Socrates. It is valuable because it is valuable.

Then when you are bidden to go somewhere, Eryximachus, you go not to the calls of flesh, but to something else?

Yes, Socrates, it is something else, now that you are condescending enough to say so.

I am not saying so. I am only asking you whether it is so or not. And when you operate, you do not really operate on

flesh, but on something else besides flesh.

You must know, Socrates, you appear to be so wise.

But is it flesh, Eryximachus, or is it something else?

It must be flesh. How can it be something else?

But if it was the flesh of a pauper, there would be no operation, so far as you are concerned.

I think not.

And if the flesh of a millionaire, there would be.

I should try to make it so.

What then is the difference between them?

I should say money.

Then, O Eryximachus, do you operate on money or flesh?

It seems that I operate on money.

So it would seem. And this puts me

in great trepidation, for there is none so poor as I; therefore, I would have to die without you operating on me, and surely, Eryximachus, this would be a calamity; nevertheless, I should try to bear it, being a philosopher.

THE TARIFF

VII

THE TARIFF

[(*Socrates is the Narrator*)]

YESTERDAY I returned from the Peace Conference at Paris, and thought I would go and look at my old haunts. So I went into the Palæstra of Taurus, which is over against the Temple of the Stock Exchange, near Trinity.

And while I was there a number of persons came up and spoke to me. And among others Critias, who asked me if I had met Carnigas at the Conference.

I believe he was there, I said, but I did not see him.

I should like, said Critias, to have you talk with him of the Tariff.

And so we called him, and Carnigas and we sat down together.

He is the one whom they say has done more for the Tariff than any one else, and has derived profit from it, so that the Theater of Dionysus has been rebuilt according to his direction, with his name just above the statue of Athene. Which would be accounted a sacrilege by some, only in these days we are so much more liberal.

What is the Tariff? I said abruptly to Carnigas, for I did not like his manner as he sat beside me. He appeared to be a strutter, and I had a wild-beast kind of feeling for him which I endeavored to control.

The Tariff, he said, is for the benefit of mankind in general, and for me in particular.

And the Tariff makes articles scarce?

Yes, Socrates. But on the other hand,

it makes higher wages, and the many would not have as much money as they do without a Tariff.

And you yourself, Carnigas, would not have so much.

No; I could not give away so much to the poor.

That would be a pity.

But, I assure you, Socrates, the Tariff is a splendid thing.

I could not help smiling at Carnigas, he was so earnest.

I am not disputing you, I said. Let us, however, proceed with the argument. Of necessities, Carnigas, there are a few and the many.

Yes.

And when they are few it is better for all, because there is more money to pay for them.

Yes.

Then, let me ask you, Carnigas, are laborers a necessity?

Oh, yes, assuredly.

But there is no tariff on laborers. They are urged to come in, they are forced to come in, agents are sent out to make them come in.

But, Socrates, our steamship companies would suffer if they didn't bring them in. And our steamship companies are controlled by financiers, and financiers are necessary to run the State.

I am glad you mentioned that, Carnigas, because if the Tariff, by not interfering with the laborers who come in is of benefit to the financiers, then, of course, when it does interfere with other necessities and prevents their coming in, why then that is a bad thing for the financiers, isn't it?

Carnigas was silent for a moment.

You are trying to trip me up, he said at last.

I wish I had that power, I replied, gently.

At this his eye twinkled.

I might say to you, he replied, that the Tariff benefits the few at the expense of the many, and that is why it is imposed on all necessities except laborers. For the financiers who control the State wish to keep the price of everything high which they *sell;* but labor, which they *buy,* they wish to obtain at the lowest price. But if I said all this you would not believe me.

O Carnigas, I replied sadly, how then could I help but believe you, seeing that you have become so rich by just such a method?

PHILOSOPHY.

VIII

PHILOSOPHY

CHARMIDES: I am glad I happened to meet you, Socrates, for I was lately wrestling in the gymnasium with Philopœmen and afterwards Cratylus came in and discoursed about Philosophy and urged me to take it up.

SOCRATES: I thought Cratylus was the one who dealt with words and their meaning; but here comes the fellow now, and we shall no doubt be enlightened. Ah, Cratylus, is it true, as Charmides says, that you have been urging him to take up the study of Philosophy?

CRATYLUS: Yes, and I maintain that it is the most useful thing there is and

that every young man should devote himself to it, and there is a book on the subject that I should like to have him read, as it will surely give him a larger idea of life and make him broad and liberal.

Soc.: I am surprised, Cratylus, that you speak of only one book, for, while I am not a reader of works of Philosophy, I am of the opinion that there are several books on the subject. Now, is this book different from the others, or is it like them?

Cr.: It is both different from some and it is like others. For you must know, Socrates, that it has only just been published. It has the advantage of being later than all the rest, and therefore is of greater value.

Then one which was published before has less value?

Yes, that is so. And for this reason those who now write can acquaint them-

selves with what has already been done, and where there are errors they can correct them. And thus they can improve on the past.

What a pity, Cratylus, that we could not have postponed our entry until a later day, when we could then be so much more wise than we are now. We must, however, submit to the inevitable and struggle with what we have. But first let me ask you a question. If a barber desires to make his trade a profitable one, in what does he become skilful?

In the use of the razor and the cutting shears.

And if a builder builds, with what does he build?

He uses the hammer and the saw and other like instruments.

And how about the farmer?

With him it is the plow and the reaper.

Then, in general, the workman uses

those things which are given to him to further his particular object?

Yes, Socrates, and I would anticipate you, for you are about to say that Philosophers use words as their tools, and here I agree with you, for this indeed is their use. And what better tools can they work with? for do not words stand for eternal ideas? and therefore they are of the highest use, and that is why I have recommended to Charmides the study of Philosophy, because it is more important than anything else.

O Cratylus, I feel myself blushing with shame, for even now you are proving to me what you say; for are not your own words overthrowing all my doubts? And I feel sure you must be right. And yet I do not quite understand, and I must beg you to be patient with me and hear me to the end. And I should like to ask you if words are all the same so far as their

general character is concerned, or if they are different.

They are different, Socrates, in this manner: for they are of two kinds, and one kind deals with things, and the other kind with the relation of things.

That is quite plain to me, Cratylus.

For there are words, such as nouns, which represent things, and other words, such as verbs and adverbs, which deal with their relations; and I can plainly see that all the words we know may be divided into one or the other class. But unless there were things, or words that represent them, then there would be no relations.

That is true.

Then the words which represent things come first and the others last, and are these dependent upon the others, Cratylus? That is, do they spring from them?

That is what they appear to do.

And should you not say then that all

words indeed are now of one class—that is to say, those which deal with things—and that all other words are merely symbols which represent the relationship of these things?

Yes, that is so.

And are the words which represent things different from each other among themselves, or are they quite the same? Or are there any classes into which they may be divided? For it seems to me important that we should determine this.

They may be divided, O crafty Socrates, into two classes, as you suggest, and I will explain this to your satisfaction. For one class of words represents the things we actually see, feel, hear, and taste with our bodies, while the other class represents those things we think about in our minds; and when we think about them we can rearrange them in a wonderful manner, so that as in a vision we can see all

kinds of beautiful images. And this is the power of words, O Socrates, and it is what makes the difference between us and the lower animals.

I am indeed bursting with gratitude to such an able master as Cratylus, whose eloquence is well-nigh irresistible, and I should like to have you go on and tell me, my master, whether the two classes of words you have mentioned come together, or whether one comes first and the other follows.

I do not think I quite understand you.

Well, then, this is what I mean: for if these two classes of words are entirely separate from each other, then we must investigate them separately; but if not, then we must discover this—if one follows the other in a natural sequence, why then, they must be joined together somewhere, or else they must be entirely independent of each other. Now, do the words that

represent things we think about, such as beauty, truth, charity, and so on, come first, or do the words which represent things we touch and see, such as horses, trees, and so on, come before these?

I should say the latter.

And is this always so, Cratylus, or are there any words representing things we think of, which we can trace back to their source and discover that they contain something which does not belong to the words representing things we touch?

No, there are no such words. But I see what you are trying to do, Socrates, and this is to trip me up, for you are trying to make out that there is nothing we can think about except those things which we see and touch; and I believe you would be willing to maintain that even these have no reality. And I would agree with you in this. But it is useless to pin me down,

for I still assert that Philosophy is the only study.

O Cratylus, I cannot argue with you, nor convince you in any way, for when you maintain so sweetly that knowledge can be obtained from books, and that Philosophy is a necessity, I am forced to rely upon words. And as I can find no words with which to combat you, except those which I learned in my childhood and which represent the common things I feel, why, I am utterly at your mercy. And you only are wise, for you have discovered apparently some other way than mine of which to convince yourself. Therefore we must part. And which way will you go, Charmides? For you have heard as much about Philosophy as you can ever know.

CHAR.: I cannot tell. For I am as much in the dark as ever. But, as I observe, Cratylus is already tired of the ar-

gument and evidently feels that he is wasting his time, for was not that his wife in the distance calling him? I should like to ask your advice. What shall I do?

Soc.: If you wish to know, O Charmides, my poor opinion is this: It is quite possible that a perfect system of Philosophy might be of some use to somebody. Before becoming a philosopher, I should therefore wait until this perfect system is invented.

And what would you do in the meantime, Socrates?

I should eat when I was hungry, gossip with my neighbors, love when I desired, be temperate at all times, and, indeed, go about my business. But as for Philosophy, I would not allow it to fool me with false hopes until some one else had first demonstrated its value.

And has not Cratylus demonstrated this?

Perhaps, O Charmides. You can judge of this better when you consult his wife. For I heard her complain only the other day that while he was using so many words, the children were crying for bread, and she was obliged to support him with the labor of her hands.

THE MISSIONARY

IX

THE MISSIONARY

(*The Dialogue is Supposed to be Related by Adœimantus of Melita*)

WE went immediately to the house of Antiphon, and there, after persuasion, he repeated to me what had taken place at the time Socrates met Apollinaris, the missionary, who had returned from his residence among the heathen. Apollinaris was at the time of his visit about sixty-five years old, very white for his age, with evangelical sideboards, and he had labored hard in many vineyards to convert the heathen.

There were certain tracts which Apollinaris insisted upon reading aloud, having been issued by the Foreign Missionary

Society at something less than two hundred per cent. profit; and this having been done, Socrates said: What do you mean, Apollinaris, when you assert that converting all people to your own idea is a sacred duty, and that thinking alike for all is a necessity? Where there is a like there must be an unlike, but you assert that this is not so, but that there is only a like. Do I understand you correctly?

That is right, said Apollinaris. There can be no unlike but only like, and by like I mean only that which I believe in, as opposed to all other false doctrine.

And your object is to convert the world to your own view, and to do this you would use any means within your power; that is, killing and slaying and milder persuasions if necessary, and this under the pretense of piety.

Yes, anything.

Very well. And I think I understand you, Apollinaris, when I say that you maintain here at home a vast establishment for the promulgation of your particular belief in other parts of the world, and this is contributed to by many faithful, and that it occupies expensive buildings and pays its officers handsome salaries for doing this very thing that you are speaking about. Am I right about this, Apollinaris?

There is some truth in what you say, Socrates, replied Apollinaris, stroking his beard meditatively; for, indeed, you, I perceive, are as keen as a Spartan hound upon the scent, in some of these things. But as for me, I am an earnest man, and have nothing to do with these home matters, only my object is to convert the heathen to my own view, and I will do anything for this.

Let me understand you clearly, Apolli-

naris. When you speak of view, you mean a belief, do you not?

Yes; belief is what I mean.

And there is no other belief but yours.

Oh, yes; but they are false.

And yours is the true belief.

I should maintain that is so.

And the false is not the true, neither is the true the false. Is that what you maintain?

You are right in that, Socrates.

And that which is false, is false only to that which is true, but it is not false to that which is false.

I do not think I catch your meaning.

There are the false and the true.

Certainly.

And if the true were not true to itself, it would not be true.

That appears to be so.

And if the true were not false to itself then it would not be false.

Certainly.

And if it were not false to that which is true, then it would not be true to that which is false.

Yes.

Would you say, then, Apollinaris, that that which is false is true?

I am tired of hearing you talk that way, Socrates, because there appears to be little sense in what you are saying. And I should think you would know better than that.

But I assure you, Apollinaris, that I am only trying to learn from you, and in order to make myself still more obscure, this being correct from a philosophical standpoint, let me ask you a simple question. Is the true true to itself, or is it true to the false?

To itself, certainly.

But not to the false.

No; I should say it was not.

Then you are false to the false because you are true to yourself.

Yes, that must be so.

And if the false is true, as you have just admitted, then you are true only to yourself but not to any one else who is true.

I should say that was so.

Then, O Apollinaris, if this is so, your life has been in vain, for you have maintained that you were true to others when you were only so to yourself, and in doing this you have been guilty of many crimes, for you have dealt with innocent and simple people discourteously by living among them and breaking up their homes by insisting upon doctrines which are true only for yourself but false for them, and you have taught them many hateful practices which they never knew before, such as rum drinking, instead of minding your own business and making it impossible for ras-

cals at home to extort money to pay themselves exorbitant salaries to maintain a hypocritical institution. Is this true or is it not true, Apollinaris? for I would have you know that I am a beginner myself.

At this, Apollinaris began to look over his tracts to find one appropriate, but Socrates interrupted him, saying, as he rose from his couch:

Before we proceed with the argument, I wish, Apollinaris, you would step across the way with me to the house of one just off the Agora. He is a barber.

And what would you have him do?

At this Socrates smiled.

O Apollinaris, I do not like your beard, and I wish you would have it removed at once, for it does not agree with me, and it is not according to my view of life at all. Therefore I must request you to do as I say, or I shall force you to it, because you have no right to wear a

beard while I am talking, if I maintain that you should not.

I think, said Zeno, the Eleatic, who had just come in, that Socrates is certainly going to an extreme, and I should advise you, he said, turning to Apollinaris, not to obey him, for surely every man has a right to wear a beard.

I shall certainly do so, said Apollinaris, glaring at Socrates. And as you say, Zeno, I have a right to it, and it becomes me very well, and I do not believe, so far as I am concerned, that I could dwell comfortably with the gods if it should be removed, and it seems to be discourteous in Socrates to suggest such a thing, not to say narrow-minded. And I shall certainly maintain my freedom in this respect.

Very well, said Socrates, with a smile. If you, Apollinaris, insist upon wearing your beard after what I have said, it may

remain for the present; but I assure you that I shall bring up the matter before the Council and see that this beard pays a proper tribute for the maintenance of the Army and Navy. And I am greatly surprised, O Apollinaris, that you, who are a missionary, do not at once perceive the logic of my demand.

THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS

X

THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS

THEÆTETUS was the son of Euphronius the Sunian and the pupil of Theodorus of Cyrene, and in the war with Corinth was greatly renowned. Yet before this happened he met Socrates, and the conversation is recorded by Terpsion, the servant of Euclid, who asserts that it is correct in the main. Now Theætetus had come from the Stadium, passing by the Acropolis and the Academy, and near Areopagus he met Socrates, who knew him at once because they resembled each other, and they went outside the Wall.

How were you educated, Theætetus? asked Socrates.

I was sent to kindergarten at the age of four and learned many games which appeared to be a kind of counterfeit of things which occur in nature; and from there I went through many classes where I was taught a little reading, writing and arithmetic, besides manual training, physiology, botany, physics, dancing, astronomy, history, and a great number of other things; and in college I learned languages, poker, football, and the nature of an oath, besides the manner of spending money; and, indeed, money, both getting and spending, was the main object, for from my earliest recollection my parents had taught me that I must train myself to make more than any one else in order to insure certain privileges at my maturity, for this seemed to be the manner of life of every one. But I observe that you, Socrates, have no mind for these things, and indeed, I know of cases where men who

achieved them have snuffed them out by suicide, which leads me to wonder about the nature of happiness.

By all means, Theætetus, I should say you had a right to know about the thing you are asking for, and I can assure you that my own desire is to learn also. First, then, there is a little matter I would ask you about. Will you answer this question: In case you wished to learn music, to whom would you apply?

I should say, a musician.

And suppose you required a knowledge of the art of healing. Would you also apply to a musician?

I think not, Socrates. But in that case it appears to me that I should apply to a physician.

And to whom would you apply for a knowledge of building?

To a builder.

Then, in general, Theætetus, in case you desired to know of a particular thing, you would go to the one who had made a study of it, and who was reputed to know about it.

I should say that was right, Socrates.

Well, then, would it be fair, or would it not be fair, to say that if you desired happiness, you would naturally go to the one who had acquired it?

I should say that was fair.

And do you know of such an one, O Theætetus?

I cannot recall any just at present, although I know of many who profess such a thing.

I believe some one told me, or I heard it at the barber shop, where all kinds of gossip float about, that you have for your own use several motor-chariots.

I have three.

And when you obtained the first one

you desired it above all other things, did you not?

I am not sure that I understand you, Socrates, because it is not quite clear to me that this is so.

But at the time you acquired the first chariot, if there had been any other thing that occupied your attention more, which was possible for you to acquire, then you would have acquired that thing in place of the thing which you did acquire. Is this true or not?

Certainly, it is true.

Then at the moment when you acquired this motor-chariot, it represented more of this elusive thing which we call happiness than anything else of which you had knowledge. Otherwise you would not have acquired it, but you would have acquired the other thing, whatever that might have been.

I think you are right, there, Socrates.

And when you acquired your second motor-chariot you desired that more than the first, otherwise you would not have acquired it, but would have been content with the first alone.

Certainly.

And you desired the third more than the other two.

I should say that was right.

It appears then, Theætetus, that you are still after happiness, for after having apparently obtained it on three different occasions, you came to me for something else that you suppose it to be.

Well, then, Socrates, I would like to ask you if you do not think it would be quite fair to say that happiness, whatever its real nature, is, so far as we are concerned, a sort of occupation, or absorption, which lasts for a time, and that when we are unhappy is when we have nothing to occupy us, but are anxiously desiring

to find something to become absorbed in?

I should think that was a fair question, Theætetus, and if you will permit me, I should like to proceed with another.

Certainly, Socrates, that is the object of our discussion.

I remember recently, on the main road that leads out of the city, I saw you one afternoon lying at full length in the dust under your motor-chariot; and there were a number of urchins grouped about you. Shall I say that you were absorbed in what you were doing?

It appears that I was.

And if you had not desired to be doing that above all other things then you would not have done it, but you would have done the other thing.

I think that is so.

Then tell me, O Theætetus, were you happy, or not? For when you have an-

swered this question truly, then we shall both know the nature of happiness, which I have been told is, after all, a sort of Penelope's web which envelopes us all.

No, Socrates, I cannot say that I was happy.

Then in this instance your occupation was not happiness.

So it appears.

And if in one case then there would be others.

True.

Then happiness is not occupation or absorption, as you have suggested.

That is quite apparent.

And that is my own conclusion, Theætetus; and when you have said I am not influenced by others, it is only because I have found that others are continually trying to cheat me with false hopes, which is the reason why I have eliminated them

from my calculations and am seeking for happiness where it is more likely to be found.

And where, O Socrates, is that?

In myself, O Theætetus.